

**Chapter 19**

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW GUIDELINES**

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### **Section 19.01 Purposes and Intent**

The Town of Fountain Hills has a desire to continually upgrade commercial, industrial and multi-family projects and has identified a number of characteristics to achieve the objective. The guidelines in this document are to advise developers, property owners and users on the criteria that will be used in reviewing commercial development plan applications.

The guidelines set forth herein are purposefully general in nature and avoid dictating specific design treatment although the preference is to encourage projects that support styles associated with the southwest environment. The belief is that creativity and design expertise lies more appropriately with the private sector and that the proper role of the Town is to ensure uniform and fair application of these design guidelines.

These guidelines are applicable for commercial, industrial and multi-family projects. Because of the extreme variance in the size and nature of such projects, it is not possible to develop a list that can be used for every site. Therefore, not all of these guidelines will apply to every application. Some guidelines describe situations that will only occur in large projects and will clearly not be applicable to small projects on small parcels. Other guidelines will only be used for specific types of commercial uses or at specific locations. However, most of these guidelines can still be achieved, regardless of project size, type or location.

### **Section 19.02 Applicability**

- A.** All proposed retail, service, commercial, wholesale, transportation, industrial or multi-family developments, re-developments or expansions, which are subject to site plan review, a Special Use Permit or a Concept Plan review pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2 shall be subject to Design Review and approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission prior to the issuance of any Special Use Permit or Building Permit in connection with such development, re-development or expansion. Likewise, prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, all conditions of said Design Review and approval must be met.
- B.** The Design Review requirements established by this Chapter shall not apply to any development that, prior to the effective date of this chapter, has been authorized by the Town by the issuance of an approved building permit. However, any extension or amendment to

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said permit prior to the completion of construction shall require Design Review approval as above.

- C. Where an existing building or site that is being added to or externally remodeled does not currently meet these design guidelines, the project shall conform to these guidelines to the extent practical given the nature and extent of the alteration.

### Section 19.03 Site Planning

- A. **Integrate with surrounding area:** To the extent possible and where land use and street patterns allow, integrate project with adjacent areas to provide easy pedestrian and vehicular access. New developments will be reviewed with respect to their response to the physical characteristics of the site and the contextual influences of the surrounding area. Drive-through uses shall be located to minimize conflicts with pedestrian routes and overall vehicular circulation and adequate stacking for the intended use shall be provided (minimum of 11 vehicles). Where practical, provide pedestrian and vehicular connections to/from existing commercial uses. Applicants shall submit a photographic or computer-generated, full-color illustration showing the proposed development (in at least four different views) as it would appear if constructed as proposed. The proposed development and landscaping, as well as the immediately surrounding buildings and landscaping, must be shown.
- B. **Create a pedestrian-oriented environment:** Create a pedestrian-oriented environment within projects with usable outdoor areas. Provide safe walkways separated from vehicles and protected from weather through the use of covered walkways, arcades or other methods that may serve the same purpose. Minimize the use of driveways and parking aisles for walk routes. Where pedestrian paths cross vehicular routes, provide a change in paving materials, textures or colors to emphasize the conflict points. Create continuous pedestrian activity in an uninterrupted sequence by minimizing gaps between buildings. Entries that face onto outdoor dining opportunities and storefront windows that attract pedestrian activity are encouraged.
- C. **Provide reasonable parking and vehicular circulation:** Provide parking that creates reasonable walking distances to buildings, but not directly abut buildings. Preference will be given to layouts where parking areas are divided from one another by landscaping. Where possible, vary the direction of parking aisles or angle them to the street. To reduce impeding overall traffic flow, parking spaces shall

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not directly access major entry drives, unless no other drive serves the property. On large lots, traffic calming devices are encouraged to enhance safety. Parking lots and future parking structures shall be located to the rear of buildings whenever reasonable. Adjacent parking lots shall be designed so that vehicles can travel from one private lot to the other (reciprocal access) without having to enter the street.

- D.     **Avoid monotony:**** Projects with more than one building or with a single building over 20,000 SF in size shall create different angles of buildings to the street to avoid monotony in site design unless other architectural treatments can achieve the desired result. Avoid leveling large areas, as natural contouring is preferred.
- E.     **Separate uses:**** Physical separation of loading/delivery/service uses from other uses is suggested. Loading and storage facilities shall be located at the rear or side of buildings and screened from public view. Design solutions should minimize visual impacts of uses and provide an attractive appearance. Loading areas should not detract from the aesthetic quality of the surroundings, even in parking areas or at the rear of buildings.
- F.     **Create attractive appearance:**** Create attractive appearance by emphasizing the views of landscaping and buildings and by minimizing the view of parking areas and vehicles. Locate delivery areas and support services (trash receptacles and ground-mounted equipment) in screened and less visible places. Provide long-term storage of shopping carts either within the tenant space or adjacent to it, behind decorative screening walls exceeding the height of the carts. Provide parking lot shopping cart corrals using durable, decorative materials that compliment the building design; avoid using striped parking spaces for corrals. Open space areas shall be clustered into larger, more meaningful areas rather than equally distributing them into smaller individual areas of lesser significance.
- G.     **Identify outdoor sales areas:**** Permanent outdoor sales along sidewalks, in parking areas and landscaped zones are discouraged. However, when the activity such as walk-up ATM's, propane sales, vending machines, outdoor dining and seasonal sales are essential to the business, the locations shall be identified as part of the site plan.

## Section 19.04 Architecture

- A. Create visual interest:** Create visual interest through distinctive structures, articulation of wall planes, variation of roof forms and other similar methods such as angling buildings. Building elevations and materials should have design characteristics that are contextually appropriate (massing, rhythm, scale, height, roof form, etc.). Building mass should be broken into smaller elements to reduce the apparent bulk of large structures, consistent with the proportions of the architectural style and surrounding uses. Where contrasting design elements are proposed, the applicant must demonstrate how the design is equal or superior to surrounding uses. All sides of buildings that are visible to adjoining uses shall be treated.
- B. Provide different elements:** All buildings should contain color change that is recognizable, but not strongly contrasting, with texture and material changes at appropriate intervals, either horizontally or vertically. Predominant façade colors should possess low reflectivity characteristics. The use of bright color schemes must be justified and may not be appropriate in many contexts. It is desirable that the spacing of elements in facades be varied rather than repetitive, with a high priority placed on the three (3) dimensional interplay of light and shadow. A minimum of three colors and/or textures must be incorporated in designs.
- C. Enhance energy conservation:** Where feasible, use architectural features to enhance energy conservation. Orient and design new structures and additions for minimum solar gain, reflectivity and glare. Shelter entries, walkways and windows and use architectural shading devices and landscaping to minimize cooling losses. Mitigate urban heat island effects. Provide ample shade for pedestrians and employee areas. Misting systems and canopies may be considered when consistent with the design character of the building. Awnings shall respond to the scale, proportion and rhythm of windows and doors.
- D. Provide open design:** Building designs should support pedestrian activity and provide natural surveillance of spaces from key locations inside and next to buildings with the appropriate placement of windows, entrances and lighting. Employee service doors shall be equipped with a security device or vision panel to allow viewing of the area surrounding the service door. Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are discouraged. If security grilles are

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deemed necessary, they shall be placed inside the building, behind the window display area.

- E. Provide accessibility:** Buildings should be accessible for every person, consistent with the Americans with Disability Act and its implementing standards and guidelines. Additional consideration should be given to including extra sidewalk widths, physical cues and limited audio distractions for the visually impaired. Minimize surface texture and elevation changes for persons using wheelchairs.
- F. Conceal utilities, equipment and services:** All roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be concealed on all sides by elements that are an integral part of the building design. Ground-mounted equipment shall be screened using masonry walls or other similar materials. Equipment that cannot be concealed due to unique functional requirements shall be made visually subordinate with architectural features that blend with the design of the main building. Electrical service panels shall be recessed into the building elevation and screened with landscaping, walls or doors. Vacuum tubes shall be internalized or placed underground. Roof drain elements shall be concealed within the building or an architectural feature.
- G. Avoid standardized corporate design themes:** Any literal transplant of architectural styles not indigenous or compatible to the southwest environment is strongly discouraged. To the extent possible, corporate branding should be incorporated into designs compatible with the surrounding area.
- H. Provide compatible infill structures:** New infill and/or renovations to existing structures must be compatible with existing surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, façade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, color, roof shapes and use of materials without duplicating outdated architectural styles. When a new or infill building is proposed that is much wider than the characteristic facades of adjacent buildings, the facade shall be broken down into series of appropriately proportioned “structural bays” or components. Typical solutions are segmented bay series of columns or masonry piers that frame windows, doors and bulkhead components. Long blank or unarticulated wall facades that face the street are strongly discouraged.

## **Section 19.05 Landscaping & Signage**

- A. Provide landscaping features:** Along streets, provide substantial landscaping features with special planting and hardscape treatment to enhance the appearance from the street. Emphasize entry drives with landscaped medians, sculptures or other similar treatments that maintains site visibility for vehicular traffic. Provide special accent planting around freestanding signs. Abide by the landscaping requirements in the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, wherein the minimum quantity and types of plantings are outlined.
- B. Encourage pedestrian use:** Provide outdoor seating areas with summer shade, trash receptacles and other features to encourage pedestrian use. Orient outdoor seating areas for winter sun and include seasonal plantings. Incorporate a mix of structures such as colonnades, canopies or trellis structures in combination with desert varieties of canopy shade trees.
- C. Provide for water conservation:** Select plant materials that are suited for our desert environment; xeriscape should be considered for planting areas. Drought-tolerant trees, shrubs and groundcovers shall be used as required in this Ordinance. Use a combination of plants for yearlong color and interest. Retain natural vegetation and incorporate it into the project whenever practical. Any proposed water features should be located in pedestrian areas.
- D. Integrate visual relief:** In large parking areas, provide canopy trees for shade and visual relief. Provide significant plantings adjacent to buildings to accent building features. Use landscape treatments to enhance the screening of outdoor storage and mechanical equipment areas. Screen the paved areas of vehicle-intense uses, such as service stations and convenience stores, from streets and major public use areas with a three (3) foot high wall (with accompanying vegetation) or a dense vegetative buffer.
- E. Provide textured walls:** All masonry walls intended for screening functions shall have an architectural texture, color and finish compatible with the primary building.
- F. Provide storm water detention:** Design retention areas to meet technical requirements, as approved by the Town Engineer, while still providing attractive landscaped areas with a natural appearance.

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- G. Integrate signage:** Locate freestanding signs on low planter walls or design monument signs to incorporate distinctive elements of the architectural style or theme of the development. Façade sign materials shall be compatible with the design of the face of the façade where they are placed. Signs shall not interfere with an already established pattern of sign locations in relation to where other adjacent buildings have placed their signs. Directional signs shall be harmonious with the area. Provide building signage that is proportional to the scale of the tenant façade and consistent with the overall architecture. Sign colors should compliment the colors used on the structures and the project as a whole; contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. Provide signage plans showing the proposed locations and materials of all signs. Master signage plans are encouraged for multi-tenant developments. All signage shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 6 of this Zoning Ordinance.
- H. Provide appropriate lighting:** Lighting should enhance the architecture of a project, comply with Chapter 8 of this Ordinance, be functional and not be offensive to its viewers or to adjacent properties. Lighting practices, including indirect lighting to minimize light pollution, glare and light trespass are strongly encouraged. Provide a complete site lighting plan including security lighting; include information on all specific light fixtures as well as locations and illumination levels in accordance with the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance.
- I. Public Art Requirement:**
- 1.** All development proposals subject to Design Review under this Chapter shall be required to provide one of the following prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy:
    - a.** Exterior public art of an appraised or invoiced value equal to or greater than 1% of the cost of building construction and associated site work and signage. Water features using recycled water are preferred; or
    - b.** A donation to the Fountain Hills Public Art Fund in an amount equal to or greater than 1% of the cost of building construction and associated site work and signage.
  - 2.** The value of construction costs will be determined by the Town using standard valuation procedures at the time of application.



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3. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Fountain Hills Cultural Council for recommendations when considering exterior public art selections.

**Section 19.06     Materials and Colors**

- A. **Use high-quality, durable materials:** Predominate exterior building materials should include, but are not limited to: stucco, brick, stone, textured masonry, styled concrete masonry units, textured tilt-up panels, architectural metal, clear and tinted glass, clay tile roofs and other building and roof materials of similar quality and durability.
- B. **Provide palette of proposed materials and colors:** With the development application provide a palette of proposed materials and colors. Select materials that are durable and appropriate for their intended use. Choose colors that relate well to one another and the surroundings. Restraint should be used in the number of different building materials selected.
- C. **Use natural materials:** Use natural materials appropriate to the southwest desert setting. Wood should not be used as an exterior finish, except as a trim component. The use of authentic adobe bricks or stucco in projects with a southwestern theme is encouraged.
- D. **Avoid highly reflective materials:** Avoid highly reflective materials and glare-inducing colors. As a general principle, coarse and highly textured materials that create shadow patterns are preferred. To reduce glare, windows and large areas of glass should be recessed in deep shadow. In order to reduce mirror effects, glass must be non-reflective and not heavily tinted.
- E. **Discouraged exterior finishes:**
  1. Colored plastics and fiberglass.
  2. Exposed unfinished foundation walls.
  3. Un-plastered exposed standard concrete masonry units.
  4. Glass curtain walls; highly reflective glass.
  5. Shiny acrylic and fluorescent paint finishes.

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6. Dark colors, except where appropriately utilized on trim.
7. Wood, except as a trim material.
8. Pre-fabricated steel panels.
9. Corrugated metal.
10. Asphalt shingles.

**F. Encouraged surface materials:**

1. Interlocking pavers.
2. Stamped and/or colored and textured concrete.
3. Matte finishes.

Any proposal that indicates specialty surface materials other than concrete or asphalt to be located within a public right-of-way or located on public property must contain an agreement, executed by the property owner, that such areas will be (a) privately maintained, (b) insured, including indemnity to the Town, in an amount and a form acceptable to the Town Attorney and (c) replaced when necessary.

- G. Select environmentally sensitive colors:** The primary colors should be sensitive to the colors found in the area's natural environment. The appropriateness of any given color shall depend on a number of factors including adjacent buildings. Bright or intense colors are discouraged, unless used on appropriate architectural styles and reserved for more refined detailing and transient features; colors must be harmonious with colors found on adjacent buildings. Appropriate varying colors can be used to articulate and reduce the apparent scale of building masses. Projects shall not be painted with a single color when such project contains (1) more than one building, (2) any multi-story building(s) and (3) any single building in excess of 20,000 SF in size.

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**Section 19.07 Administration**

- A.** When exercising its powers of Design Review under this section, the Planning & Zoning Commission shall hold concurrent hearings with the Concept Plan review. All reviews, hearings and decisions shall be completed in conjunction with the Concept Plan review, unless specifically requested otherwise by an applicant.
- B.** **Interpretation & Enforcement:** The Zoning Administrator is charged with the responsibility of interpretation and enforcement of this Chapter. Interpretation of this Chapter includes, but is not limited to, clarification of intention and the delegation of processing procedures and requirements.
- C.** **Appeals:** Any applicant may appeal a decision of the Planning & Zoning Commission to approve, conditionally approve or deny an application for Design Review under this Chapter to the Town Council. Said appeal shall be filed within 30 days of the date the decision was rendered by the Planning and Zoning Commission.